

1973

Planning and Accomplishment Narrative  
Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge  
P. O. Box 631  
Seymour, Indiana

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*Feb. 8, 1974*  
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## PART I. REFUGE HIGHLIGHT STATEMENT

Fiscal year 1973 was anticipated to be the first year of major development on the Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge. In place of development an intensive master planning effort was undertaken. The master plan was initiated in FY 1972 based on manually prepared refuge resource and capability maps and original refuge objectives. This procedure was later determined to be outdated in the age of computerization so a contract for \$19,500 was awarded to the University of Minnesota for translating the information into computer form. A computerized refuge master plan had never previously been attempted. It was believed that the computer would be at its best in resolving space and time conflicts to arrive at the best possible mix of refuge objectives. Project Leader, E. S. Crozier, Chief, National Planning Team, reported to the Director in Washington and his staff on September 19, 1973, that the Muscatatuck NWR was the best planned refuge in the United States.

Funds, totaling \$185,000 for the first increment of refuge expansion were approved in the fall of 1972. Refuge personnel had planned that this money would be used for the construction of our first significant waterfowl impoundment. Later a new entrance road off of U. S. Highway 50 was deemed by Regional Office personnel to be of greater need. This project required purchasing the 10 acre Roger Beavers tract which lies along U. S. Highway 50. Bid invitations were advertised for approximately 4,300 lineal feet of asphaltic road and a 80 foot by 80 foot parking lot. The contract was awarded to Sargents Construction Company of Oolitic, Indiana for \$94,233. Construction is planned for the summer of 1974.

An invitation to bid on the construction of a concrete block and frame type comfort station was also advertised in August but no contractors submitted bids. Bid invitations are now being revised to include a visitor contact station.

The construction of two vault toilets did mark the first facilities for our visiting public. George Newsom of Des Moines, Iowa received the contract with a bid of \$4,978. These funds were part of the pollution abatement money allotted to the refuge.

Refuge maintenance facilities were relocated to the Pfaffenberger farm which required considerable cleaning and modernization. Work that has been completed involve: removing and cleaning up a hog raising operation; rewiring of the carpenter and automotive shop; installing restroom facilities and septic tank system; painting and paneling the interiors; and re-tinning and re-roofing the carpenter shop. Eventually it is hoped that a large storage building will be constructed for housing the farm equipment, road grader and other refuge vehicles.

Environmental restoration was a major refuge activity during 1973. Over 2.5 miles of fencing and 59 buildings were sold by sealed bids. The successful bidders were responsible for removing the structures and the refuge staff assisted by the Green Thumb crew completed the final cleanup. Only the set of buildings on the Voelksen farm remain for disposal.

Mr. Voelksen appears to have been successful in his attempt to continue to reside on the land purchased by the Bureau on March 7, 1972. Attempts to evict Mr. Voelksen have been deferred by the U. S. Attorney's office, thus enabling Mr. Voelksen to reside on the refuge without paying rent or obtaining a special use permit since January 1, 1973.

The protection of government property and control of the visiting public has been a major refuge concern. Past vandalism and burglary and then the finding of a murdered young woman in a burned out automobile all stressed the importance of restricting the number of access points to the refuge. The Jackson and Jennings County Commissioners both agreed to the temporary closing of roads within the refuge boundary, thereby permitting the refuge to control the location and times that entry is permitted to the public. The refuge has submitted a petition for permanent closing of the Jackson County roads and is awaiting its final disposition.

A refuge bird study has been in progress since May by Mr. Tom Sporre, a Purdue University wildlife graduate student. A refuge bird list is being compiled along with habitat requirements, abundance and yearly fluctuations.

We were privileged to have the Honorable Lee H. Hamilton, Ninth District Congressman, visit the refuge on February 10, 1973. He was shown a slide presentation and then given an auto tour of the refuge. Congressman Hamilton is very interested in refuge development and was responsible in getting funds for master planning and initial development.

The refuge area experienced a very wet spring with March and April receiving 13.53 inches of rainfall. This is almost twice the average precipitation during these two months.

## PART II. REFUGE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### 610 Trails

Public use of our one developed trail was less than originally anticipated. The lack of sanitary facilities for the visiting public required that public use of the refuge be de-emphasized to the news media. School groups desiring to visit the refuge were discouraged because of the absence of a comfort station. The addition of two vault toilets in August has lessened the problem although the refuge is still awaiting a source of public drinking water.

### 611 Wildlife Tour Route-Motorized

The refuge does not have a formalized auto tour route. This output only occurs when a scheduled school group is rained out of walking the wildlife trail or when dignitaries visit the refuge.

### 613 Contact Station

The visitor contact station originally planned for the first increment of expansion has not been constructed to date.

### 615 Other Programs

The planned output for the category, other programs, was incorrect. The demand for this service by the surrounding communities is strong and continues to increase. With only a small amount of advertisement concerning the availability of slide shows, movies, lectures, etc., the refuge staff could undertake a full time project.

### 622 Professional Services

The output of professional services was slightly over-estimated and aggravated by an error in documentation. Greater accuracy in record keeping will show an increase in this output.

### 631 Hunting Resident Game

A very wet fall in 1972, with the opening weekend of quail and rabbit hunting having a steady rain, substantially reduced the number of hunters taking to the field. The bad weather combined with state wildlife biologist reports of reduced quail and rabbit populations accounted for the difference between planned and accomplished outputs.

### 632 Fishing

Without the construction of the originally planned 100 acre impoundment, fishing was again restricted to six small farm ponds. The failure to achieve our planned fishing output can be attributed to the lack of construction of a sizeable impoundment.

#### 633 Other Consumptive Recreation

The wet fall weather dampened the spirit of the nut and persimmon gathers, but the moisture did provide for an excellent crop of mushrooms the following spring. The demand for other consumptive resources appears to have been over-estimated and will be reduced in the future.

#### 634 Wildlife Observation

Three factors combined to substantially reduce the number of wildlife observers visiting the refuge. First, the lack of sanitary facilities required that all forms of public recreation be de-emphasized. Second, a significant waterfowl impoundment was not constructed as originally planned. Third, control of the visiting public was improved by limiting access to only two of the nine roads into the refuge, thereby permitting greater accuracy in measuring the public use actually occurring on the refuge.

#### 635 Wildlife Appreciation

The reasons for the difference between the planned and accomplished wildlife appreciation are substantially the same as those given for output 634, Wildlife Observation. Closing of certain refuge roads eliminated vehicle traffic that was using the roads simply for transportation to and from a point.

#### 636 Photography

Photography was inadvertently overlooked as a planned output for FY 1973. The accomplished output is considered to be reasonable when the facts mentioned in the previously discussed outputs for reduced public use are considered. As waterfowl become more plentiful to the area, photography will become of greater importance.

#### 638 Public Affairs

The accomplished public affairs output would have been much closer to the planned output if construction would have occurred as planned. With the de-emphasis on public use, fewer articles were released to the local newspapers and radio stations.

#### 640 Camping

Although camping is not a scheduled output, occasions arise where it is advantageous to the refuge to permit some limited forms of primitive camping. The refuge hosted a Boy Scout jamboree with over 100 boys and leaders participating in a two night camp out. On several occasions local Girl Scouts and church groups have stayed overnight on the refuge.

#### 641 Picnicking

The only picnicking occurring on the refuge is associated with other outputs such as, conducted tour groups and fishing. Organized groups visiting the refuge from a considerable distance occasionally request that an area be furnished for eating a sack lunch. Also, family fishing outings may involve a picnic lunch.

#### 646 Other Non-Wildlife Oriented

Requests to ride horses on the refuge roads are received three to four times a year. This output has been permitted providing that the riders kept their horses on the roads. With an increase in public use associated with future development, horseback riding will be eliminated.

#### 650 Studies and Publications

Reporting of two unpublished studies during FY 1973 was inadvertently overlooked. An environmental assessment study was completed by refuge personnel in May of 1973 and a refuge bird study has been in progress since January 1973, by a Purdue graduate student.

#### 655 Ecological Monitoring

The frequency of the need for ecological monitoring was over-estimated. The conditions requiring ecological monitoring on the refuge usually are of a one time nature and cannot be predicted as to frequency of occurrence.

#### 664 Scientific Sites

Several sites and buildings are still being considered as possible scientific sites. Information concerning the Myers and Stanfield log cabins, Indian mound and suspected Indian camp grounds has been sent for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

#### 670 Threatened Species

The greater sandhill crane had been considered a threatened species until being removed from this status in the spring of 1973. The number of cranes visiting the refuge during FY 1973 was very close to the number planned.

#### 671 Special Recognition Species

Without construction of the first major impoundment, the number of shore, marsh, and water birds visiting the refuge did not significantly increase.

#### 672 Wildlife Diversity

An inadvertent reporting error was made as 138 wildlife species were recorded for the refuge in FY 1973, which would be a deviation less than 25 per cent. If the proposed impoundment had been constructed, the accomplished output would have been very close to the planned output.

673 Waterfowl Maintenance

Goose and duck use days increased slightly during FY 1973, but were substantially less than the three million plus use days planned. This difference is due to the fact that a large impoundment was not constructed as originally programmed.

680 Waterfowl Production

Waterfowl production remained at what it had been in FY 1972. Until additional suitable water areas are developed for brood habitat, production will not increase significantly.

682 Species Donated

The refuge did not have an opportunity to donate any wildlife species during FY 1973. This output is expected to be used during FY 1974.

690 Livestock

An error was made in reporting a deviation as there was no planned or accomplished livestock output.

698 Other Receipts

The refuge did not plan or accomplish an output under the category other receipts. An error was evidently made by the computer.